DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 241 153 PS 014 188

AUTHOR Clapp, Beecher E.
TITLE Tennessee Teacher Career Ladder.
PUB DATE 22 Nov 83
NOTE 9p.; Paper presented at the Harvard Education Conference (Cambridge, MA, November 22, 1983).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Career Ladders; *Educational Innovation; Elementary Secondary Education; *Master Teachers; *Public Schools; Salaries; *State Programs; *Teacher Evaluation
IDENTIFIERS *Master Teacher Program; *Teacher Competencies; Tennessee

ABSTRACT

Tennessee's Better Schools Program includes a Master Teacher Program that has three components: teacher education, clinical supervision of beginning teachers, and a career ladder based on performance. In conjunction with the establishment of the Master Teacher Program, 23 master teacher competencies for teacher evaluation have been defined. Comptencies fall within one of four domains: planning, teaching strategies, classroom management, and professional development and leadership. A list of these competencies was sent for review to the 5,000 members of the Tennessee Teachers' Study Council. Teachers indicated whether and to what degree the identified competencies were important, clarified wording, and added other competencies. The list was revised and returned to the teacher leaders to share with school faculty in all 1,700 schools within Tennessee. Teachers were again asked for comments and suggestions. At present, the list has been revised for the third time and is now being reviewed by scholars and others in Tennessee and across the country. To evaluate teachers on the basis of such competencies, it has been suggested that evaluators should (1) clearly define evaluation criteria; (2) plan for continuous, long-term evaluation; (3) provide for mixed teams of observers; and (4) require rigorous evaluations. (RH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
X Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

Tennessee Teacher Career Ladder

HARVARD EDUCATION CONFERENCE

November 22, 1983

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Beecher E. Clapp
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ED241153

PS014188

Thank you, Mr. Heckinger. Good afternoon fellow panelists and ladies and gentlemen. It is a great pleasure to represent and bring greetings from Dr. Robert McElrath, Commissioner of Education and the Honorable Lamar Alexander, Governor of Tennessee. In his first campaign for Governor, Lamar walked across the state from Bristol to Memphis. He has published a photographic essay of his trip entitled, The Tennesseans, A People and Their Land. In that book he quotes Maynard Headrick, an old gentleman who lives in Miller's Cove, who said, "People ought to sound like where they come from." You can tell by the way I sound where I come from. My only salvation is that I can also tell where most of you come from. When you come to Tennessee, you will hear a lot of folks who sound like I do. President Futrell was in Nashville at Vanderbilt not long ago, and she heard plenty of Tennessee talk.

In recent weeks I have had the interesting experience of participating in the Tennessee General Assembly legislative hearings conducted by the Select Committee on Education. The Select Committee, composed of seven members each from the Senate and House Education Committees, is charged with the responsibility of preparing "master teacher/master administrator" legislation derived from Governor Alexander's Better Schools Program and the Tennessee Education Association proposals. That Committee is now in session.

Our legislature is made up of fine men and women who, for the most part, are genuinely interested in state government and in making Tennessee a better place in which to live. Occasionally, debate becomes heated and some of that language unique to East Tennessee hill country or the flat lands of West Tennessee comes through.

On such an afternoon not long ago, I heard two colorful quotes which in some ways characterize the state of education. In admonishing TEA to work with Governor Alexander in the best interests of the students, a legislator pointed

out "When the water buffalos fight, it's the frogs that get hurt." At another point, the same gentleman, somewhat perplexed by the complexity of the issues remarked, "The water won't clear up until you get the hogs out of the creek."

The educational enterprise, from K-12 public and private schools through the college and university system is indeed like a muddy, mirky and meandering creek. Until we get the hogs out of the creek, the water won't clear up and the frogs will continue to get hurt.

One of the continuing debates in educational circles, and now in the public arena, has to do with formative versus summative evaluation. In Tennessee we get plenty of assistance in improvement and staff development activities (formative information) but few step forward to provide constructive help in accountability (summative information) by which personnel, specifically job status, decisions can be made. For example, one of our staff development consultants, in despairing our efforts to combine formative and summative evaluation processes, said that she did not intend to wear the black hat. The research in the area of teacher evaluation has been helpful in identifying the cautions and pitfalls, but there is no consensus on an evaluation process for identifying master teachers. The notion that the act of teaching is so mysterious and ethereal that teachers cannot be evaluated really muddies the creek. That is one of the biggest hogs which must come out of the creek if we are to proceed with the career ladder concept. Michael Scriven says that "teacher evaluation is a disaster. That the practices are shoddy and the principles are unclear." A search of the literature by the Review of Educational Research does an excellent job describing the state of the art, but neither does this information suggest alternative directions. Those practitioners on the firing line, then, are charged with setting a course in uncharted waters. So the question, "What is a master teacher?" is not an easy one to answer. It depends upon your point

of view. There are those who describe the master teacher in terms of lists of processes. Others in talking about master teachers say, "It doesn't matter whether you win or lose, but how you play the game." And, still others, mostly school board members and some parents, wish to connect master teaching only and directly to student achievement.

In Tennessee we are facing many issues related to evaluation. Before responding further to the question, "What is a master teacher?" I would like to tell you about our plans. The Better Schools Program has 10 points, including Basic Skills First, Computer Skills Next, more math and science, a revised and refocused vocational education program, summer institutes for bright and talented students, alternative schools for disruptive students and the Master Teacher/ Master Administrator Program. The Master Teacher Program has three major components. I sent copies of the Select Committee's concept papers for you. If any of you wish a copy of the proposed act, give me your name and address and I will mail you a copy. The first component of the Master Teacher Program is teacher education. The Select Committee has made a number of recommendations which will lead to the improvement of teacher education. I will leave the details of the recommendations for your questions if you are interested. The second component is a concern for the beginning teacher. The plans include a probationary year whereby the beginning teacher will teach under the supervision of two master teachers. At the end of the year, the candidate's evaluation, based on the criteria established, will be reviewed by the State Certification Commission which will issue or deny initial certification. Once the teacher has been certified, he/she will begin an apprentice period of three years. During that period, the teacher again will be assigned to two master teachers who will be responsible for supervision and assessment of teaching deficiencies and will provide assistance in an effort to meet the competencies required. If

an apprentice teacher is employed at the conclusion of three years, the State Certification Commission, on the basis of the objective evaluation, will issue or deny a certificate for entry into the first level, the professional level, of the career ladder. And that brings me to the third component of the Master Teacher Program. A career ladder is provided which "shall be designed to promote staff development among teachers and reward with substantial pay supplements those teachers evaluated as outstanding and who accept additional responsibilities." So we want first to improve the teacher education preservice program. Second, we believe that during the first four years the beginning teacher must participate in a clinical supervision program. Finally, in order to attract high quality students into the colleges of education and to retain them in the profession, a career ladder based upon proven performance, not paper credentials, and significantly higher salaries has been established. Teachers at the second career level, senior teachers, may be awarded a $2,000 to $4,000 salary supplement. Teachers at the third career level, master teachers, will receive $3,000, $5,000 or $7,000 salary supplements depending on the length of the contract.

So, the framework for the Master Teacher Program is established. It has been established by the Select Committee. The Department is now in the process of defining the master teacher and the competencies for an objective, fair evaluation. It is important to recognize that student learning and achievement are affected not only by teacher behavior, but also by the characteristics of the school, including principal leadership; the characteristics of the student body and student motivation and discipline. Thus, in promoting the improvement of teaching and learning, we must be cognizant of the context in which the teacher teaches. We agree there is a connection between teaching and learning, but it is not a simple one. Given the state of the art, it would be unfair to evaluate and compare the teacher in the intercity school of Memphis and the teacher in the affluent Memphis suburb of Germantown on the basis of student achievement.

Josh Billings once said, "It weren't my ignorance that done me in; it was what I knowed that wasn't so." There are some things which we may know which we can't yet prove. We are launching an intensive program of research to establish the relationship between some specific teacher behaviors and student achievement. In the meantime, it is our position that the competencies identified are characteristic of excellent teachers who have consistently produced high achieving students.

As I stated earlier, not only is it important to consider the context in which the teacher teaches and the other factors which impact learning, it is also important to secure information on the teaching competencies and indicators from as many sources as possible. We are currently devising instruments and/or processes which will secure information from eight sources:

(1) Classroom Observation

(2) Portfolio

(3) Applicant Interview

(4) Principal Interview

(5) Peer Interview

(6) Student Questionnaire

(7) Knowledge of Subject Matter Test

(8) Knowledge of English Language Test

We began our efforts over a year ago by asking Susan Rosenholtz and Jane Stallings of Peabody-Vanderbilt University to identify from the Effective Schools Research those competencies characteristic of effective teaching. Twenty-three competencies were identified in four domains: planning, teaching strategies, classroom management, and professional development and leadership. Once the competencies were established from the literature, they were sent to the 5,000 members of the Tennessee Teachers' Study Council for review. We believed it was

important to add the dimension of teacher experience. Teachers indicated whether or not the identified competencies were important, to what degree, made suggestions for clarification of the wording, and added other competencies. The list was revised and returned to these 5,000 teacher leaders to share with every school faculty in all 1,700 schools in Tennessee, again asking for comments and suggestions. We found a high degree of agreement with the competencies, a few additions, and many suggestions for rewording. The document has been revised for the third time and is now being reviewed by Rosenholtz, Stallings, Bob Soar, Jay Millman and others in Tennessee and across the country. In addition, we are preparing the instrumentation for the classroom observation portion of the evaluation process. A master teacher plans, has knowledge of subject matter and can task analyze prerequisites (knowledge and/or skill) as curriculum is developed for students, has a repertoire of teaching strategies, has some specific classroom management skills, and certain professional development and leadership competencies. I brought each of you copies of these competencies with me on the plane. We will distribute them at the end of the panel. Please mark them tentative.

Many teachers fear and distrust evaluation, especially evaluations that might or might not lead to higher pay. Many of the old merit pay plans failed because of a poor evaluation process and the mistrust it generated. We view evaluation as the heart of the career ladder.

The National Governor's Association Ad Hoc Committee on Rewarding Teachers for Performance, chaired by Governor Alexander, offers four suggestions for the development of a successful evaluation plan.

1. Clearly define evaluation criteria. Teachers should know <u>before</u> evaluations begin exactly what behaviors and competencies will be expected.

2. Plan for continuous, long-term evaluations. Avoid the pop-quiz, 30-minute classroom visit; spread several visits throughout a given year.

3. Provide for mixed teams of observers. Include administrators and teachers; good teachers recognize good teaching, and understand variations among students and classes.

4. Require rigorous evaluations. It is as important to be fair to the taxpayers as it is to be fair to teachers. The program will fail if standards slip and admission to the top steps of the ladder becomes automatic.

Our Commissioner and Governor and all of us working on the project are very conscious of the conflicting research and points of view, but we are also committed to taking the steps needed to develop a sound, comprehensive evaluation system. We will make mistakes, but we will keep the process open to the public and the professionals in Tennessee.

At this time we are thinking about master teachers and each of us in the panel is presenting views of the competent teacher. I have stressed master teaching, the context of teaching and I believe in the totality of the interaction between the teacher and learner. I am reminded of an old poem which I love by Walt Whitman--"There Was a Child Went Forth." If I could assign homework for you tonight, in addition to recommending that you review Jay Millman's excellent Handbook of Teacher Evaluation, I wish you would re-read, for the benefit of the soul, the Leaves of Grass by Walt Whitman. In poetic language Whitman tells you as no psychologist could the way in which children and youth react to the totality of their community and environment with all of their experiences. And, then if I might say what there is in the challenge of the

future for you or for me, I would quote this poem and say with Whitman--"the song is to the singer and comes back most to him, the acting is to the actor and comes back most to him, the murder is to the murderer and comes back most to him, the love is to the lover and comes back most to him. The teaching is to the teacher and comes back most to him."

Ladies and gentlemen, we in Tennessee solicit your help and assistance and that of our other friends across the Nation.

Thank you.

Beecher E. Clapp
Deputy Commissioner
Tennessee Department of Education